

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03406 250419Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, KS
SUBJ: NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR UNIFICATION (NCU) ELECTION

1. SUMMARY: MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT NCU ELECTIONS IN MAY.
PUBLIC INTEREST, CENTERING ON LOCAL PERSONALITIES RATHER THAN
GENERAL POLITICAL ISSUES, APPEARS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE
RESPECTABLE LEVEL OF VOTER PARTICIPATION, AND ISSIDENT HOPES
FOR BOYCOTT APPEAR TO BE IN VAIN. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
CHALLENGING SMOOTHNESS OF NCU ELECTION CAMPAIGN, EVEN IF THEY
SHOULD OCCUR, WILL NOT LIKELY DISRUPT ELECTION PROCESS.
END SUMMARY.

2. NCU ELECTIONS SHOULD, BY LAW, OCCUR BETWEEN MAY 1 AND
JUNE 29. MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT ELECTIONS IN MAY. MINISTRY
OF HOME AFFAIRS (MHA) ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATE FOR HOLDING ELECTIONS
TO FILL 2,583 SEAT NCU SHOULD PRECEDE ELECTION DATE BY 18 DAYS;
THUS, VOTING LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE DURING MID-MAY AT
EARLIEST. CAMPAIGN PERIOD LIMITED TO ONE WEEK
IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING ELECTION DAY. DESPITE BAN ON
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03406 250419Z

FORMAL CAMPAIGNING AND LACK OF MHA ANNOUNCEMENT,
PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES SEEM ABUNDANT AND ACTIVE.
HANGUK ILBO SURVEY REPORTED MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF
INCUMBENT NCU MEMBERS PLAN TO SEEK RE-ELECTION.
ASSEMBLYMEN, DISSIDENTS AND OPPOSITION PARTY OFFICIALS
HAVE CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS OF PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES
(ASPIRING CANDIDATES CURRYING FAVOR IN THEIR LOCAL

COMMUNITIES THROUGH GIFTS AND DONATIONS).

3. ALTHOUGH NCU MEMBERSHIP CARRIES NO SALARY, BENEFITS IN TERMS OF HONOR AND PRESTIGE ARE APPARENTLY STRONG ENOUGH TO MOTIVATE CANDIDATES. CANDIDATES' PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND/OR FAMILY TIES IN TURN GENERAGE VOTER INTEREST. (BY LAW, POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS ARE PROHIBITED FROM RUNNING.) IN GENERAL, NCU CANDIDATES ARE LOCALLY INFLUENTIAL PERSONALITIES WITH A SOUND FINANCIAL POSITION, BUT OTHERS ALSO SEEM ATTRACTED TO TRY FOR THE OFFICE -- FOR EXAMPLE, FKTU SOURCES REPORT SOME 50 TRADE UNIONISTS RUNNING IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE NATION, COUNTING ON STRENGTH OF THEIR LOCAL BRANCH UNIONS TO CARRY THEM.

4. DUP HAS LAUNCHED FORMAL DEMAND FOR DIRECT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BY MEANS OF PETITION AND SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN. OPPOSITION PARTIES AND DISSIDENTS CONSIDER NCU ELECTION AS SUPPORTING YUSIN SYSTEM AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE BOYCOTT. HOWEVER, NCU CANDIDATES AND MOST VOTERS APPARENTLY DO NOT VIEW ELECTION IN THESE TERMS. MOST DISSIDENTS ADMIT GENERAL VOTER INTEREST (REPORTEDLY HIGHER IN RURAL AREAS THAN URBAN), WHILE NOT AT WHITE HEAT, APPEARS SUFFICIENT TO MAKE ELECTIONS A SUCCESS. THOSE OPPOSING NCU SYSTEM ACKNOWLEDGE A LACK OF ACCESS TO MASS MEDIA FOR EDUCATING PUBLIC TO UNDERLYING SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTION. DISSIDENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 03406 250419Z

STILL HOPE FOR DEMONSTRATIONS (ESPECIALLY BY STUDENTS) AGAINST NCU TO SHOW SOME REPUDIATION OF INDIRECT ELECTION SYSTEM. WHILE THIS POSSIBLE, IT IS UNLIKELY TO REACH PROPORTIONS WHICH WOULD AFFECT SMOOTH OPERATION OF ELECTION. SNEIDER

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